



NOTES FROM THE:

Professional Military Comptroller School

PMCS Celebrates 30 Years of Service to the
Department of Defense

by Major Buck Alleman

On 5 March 1999, the Honorable Robert F. Hale, Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Financial Management and Comptroller, provided the keynote address at a luncheon commemorating 30 years of service in educating financial managers in the Department of Defense (DoD). Assisting him in cutting the cake were Col Charles W. Martin, USAF, the current Director of PMCS, and former directors Col Hugh S. Austin, USAF, Retired, Col Walter E. Edmonds, USAF, Retired, and Col Charles J. Kaysing, USAF, Retired. Also present were current and former faculty members, local alumni, other friends of PMCS, and the 54 students of PMCS Class 99-B.



Holding the sword used in the cake cutting are Col Charles W. Martin, Col Walter E. Edmonds, Honorable Robert F. Hale, Col Hugh S. Austin, and Col Charles J. Kaysing.

History

In a memo dated 21 October 1965, Mr Robert N. Anthony, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Comptroller), tasked Mr Leonard Marks, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Air Force (Financial Management) to take the lead in a financial management study. His twofold challenge was to determine whether the DoD was doing an adequate job of educating comptroller personnel and educating all managers in DoD on the financial aspects of their jobs. On 11 January 1966, Mr Marks established a

joint Service task force to conduct a study of financial management education in the DoD. The Steering Committee consisted of Mr Marks, Mr Charles F. Baird, Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Financial Management), and Mr W. Brewster Kopp, Assistant Secretary of the Army (Financial Management). Thirty representatives from the three Services formed the Executive Committee, Advisors, and other panel members. The Marine Corps was not included in the study.

The study of Financial Management Education in the DoD (known as the MEDoD study) primarily addressed the in-place training and education programs for financial managers supporting comptrollership functions. It also considered other courses containing financial management subjects that prepared other managers for the financial aspects of their jobs.

Public Law established the position of Comptroller in DoD and each of the military departments in the same timeframe as the National Security Act of 1947. The law reflected Congressional appreciation for public concern about the problem of financial management of the resources required for defense. Nearer the time of the MEDoD study, Public Law 84-863 stated that the Secretary of Defense and each of the military departments should achieve and maintain a level of proficiency in financial management that ensures good stewardship of public resources for national defense.

Part of the findings of the MEDoD study included an analysis of the Service concepts of comptrollership:

1. The Army operates under the principle that comptrollers should be generalists rather than financial specialists.
2. The Navy concept is that all military officers are generalists.
3. The Air Force positions the comptroller as a financial specialist first and generalist second.

However, the study noted that while the Air Force established a career pattern for officers in comptrollership duties, it did not have a formal career development program.

The MEDoD study concluded that current job standards and qualification standards indicated that military departments tend to accept a lower level of professional competency in comptrollership than what the

Public Law required. For example, an officer was considered fully qualified after only one year on the job, although there may have been no formal training or formal education in a comptroller related field.

The general recommendations of the MEDoD study were issued in a report dated 13 March 1967. They addressed career planning and training and education. The Professional Military Comptroller Course (PMCC) was developed in response to the MEDoD study.

In 1968, PMCC was chartered to provide a course in military Comptrollership taught at the professional level as education rather than training. The course was originally designed to bridge the gap between functional area expertise and broad managerial responsibilities.

The inaugural 12-week class of 23 Air Force students was held from 5 August 1968 to 25 October 1968. Initially, the course was to be conducted three times a year with 25 students. Beginning in 1969, the student load was increased to 40. Later that year the course was shortened to nine weeks.

In 1973, as a result of a Financial Management Improvement Conference among representatives of the three military Services and the DoD (Comptroller), a special task group recommended that PMCC be made available to the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and other DoD agencies. In addition, the Army and Navy agreed to provide one highly qualified faculty member. In 1973, the course was reduced to eight weeks, and the student load increased to 60.

The next major change occurred in 1977 when the course was upgraded to school status. Since then it has operated as the DoD Professional Military Comptroller School (PMCS). The final change to the course length was in 1992 when the course was shortened to six weeks and offered five times a year.

Today

Today, the PMCS faculty consists of six Air Force officers, one Army officer, one Navy officer, one Air Force civilian, and one DFAS civilian. In addition, there are two administrative personnel: one Air Force civilian and one Air Force NCO.

The six-week course is offered five times a year with 60 students per class. The typical class is one-third field-grade officers and two-thirds civilians in the grades of GS-12 to GS-15. Exceptional Captains and GS-11s attend on a space available basis. The seats are allocated to each Service and agency as follows: Air Force—26; Army—16; Navy—9; and DFAS and other DoD agencies—9.

The two-week course for Guard and Reserve Forces is offered only once per year. It also has sixty students authorized.

The commemoration of the 30th year of PMCS in FY99 is based on the graduation date of the first class in FY69. In that 30 years the school has graduated 7,450 students.



Current Faculty—First Row—Cdr Rita Jones, Maj Buck Alleman, Col Charlie Martin, Lt Col Roni Carstens, Ms Patsy Swain—Second Row—Maj Dianne Armon, Mr Bryan Oberg, Maj Ellen Gill, SSgt Dennis James, and Mr Mark McLeod.

PMCS Milestones

- 1968 Professional Military Comptroller Course (PMCC) chartered and first class graduates (12 weeks).
- 1969 PMCC shortened to 9 weeks.
- 1971 An Advanced Academic Degree (Economics) faculty position added.
- 1973 Attendance opened to Army, Navy, Marine Corps and DoD agencies.
Army and Navy provide faculty members.
Course shortened to 8 weeks.
American Council on Education (ACE) granted 5 semester hours of graduate-level credit for course completion.
- 1977 Upgraded to school status as PMCS.
ACE increased graduate-level credit to 6 hours.
- 1983 Added two-week Guard and Reserve course.
- 1984 Civilian faculty member added.
- 1992 PMCS shortened to 6 weeks.
- 1994 DFAS faculty member added.

30 Years of PMCS Leadership

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| May 67 - Jul 68 | Col Edward T. Bayala |
| Jul 68 - Aug 68 | Col Harold D. Swain |
| Aug 68 - May 69 | Lt Col John R. Smith |
| May 69 - Dec 71 | Col Walter C. Vornbrock |
| Dec 71 - Mar 72 | Col Bern Beatty |
| Mar 72 - Dec 74 | Col Hollis Lunsford |
| Dec 74 - Dec 76 | Col Hugh S. Austin |
| Jan 77 - Jun 79 | Col Schuyler P. Berry |
| Jun 79 - Jun 81 | Col Walter E. Edmonds |
| Jun 81 - Sep 84 | Col Norman L. Merritt |
| Sep 84 - Sep 85 | Col Charles L. Martin |
| Sep 85 - Jul 86 | Col Charles K. Crawford |
| Jul 86 - Jun 90 | Col Richard E. O'Neill |
| Sep 90 - Jul 93 | Col Charles J. Kaysing |
| Jul 93 - Jan 96 | Col B. Sterling Roth |
| Jan 96 - Jun 98 | Col Mack D. Foster |
| Jun 98 - Present | Col Charles W. Martin |